



CITY COUNCIL

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
HONOLULU, HAWAII

No. 20-130

RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE MAYOR AND THE CITY ADMINISTRATION TO IMPLEMENT A PROGRAM TO TEST THE CITY'S SEWER SYSTEM FOR TRACES OF THE VIRUS THAT CAUSES COVID-19.

WHEREAS, on January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern; and

WHEREAS, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the President of the United States on March 13, 2020 declared a national emergency and on April 1, 2020 declared a major disaster for the State of Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, in March and April 2020, the Governor ("Governor") of the State of Hawaii ("State") and the Mayor ("Mayor") of the City and County of Honolulu ("City") responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by issuing a series of proclamations and emergency orders that, among other things:

- Declared a state of emergency in the State and City;
- Closed liquor, food, and other retail establishments;
- Imposed a mandatory 14-day quarantine on all persons entering Hawaii, including both returning residents and out-of-state visitors;
- Implemented a stay-at-home order which required all residents to remain at home except to engage in specified essential businesses and activities; and
- Closed certain State and City facilities; and

WHEREAS, these efforts have been successful and, as of May 14, 2020, Hawaii had one of the lowest rates of COVID-19 infections in the United States, with a statewide total of 637 positive cases and 17 deaths reported since February 28th; and

WHEREAS, in May 2020, the Governor and Mayor issued a proclamation and an emergency order, respectively, that relaxed restrictions on certain businesses and operations, but emphasized that COVID-19 continues to endanger the health, safety, and welfare of the people of Hawaii, and that people need to continue to self-isolate in order to slow the spread of COVID-19; and



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WHEREAS, an important way to monitor COVID-19, and help prevent a resurgence of infections in Hawaii, is through contact tracing, in which public health staff help patients recall everyone with whom they had close contact when they may have been infectious, and then warn those individuals of their potential exposure; and

WHEREAS, there are now 80 contact tracers in Hawaii, which has a population of 1.4 million people, and the State recently began working with the University of Hawaii to train up to 300 people to become contract tracers; and

WHEREAS, while the most effective way to monitor COVID-19 and prevent its resurgence in the community may be to conduct individual nasal swab tests, the tests are expensive, in short supply, and difficult to administer, and have not been used on the scale needed to get an accurate picture of the prevalence of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, another tool to track the prevalence of COVID-19 in a particular area is wastewater testing, in which sewage is taken from wastewater treatment plants and analyzed to detect viral particles, and

WHEREAS, wastewater testing screens an entire city or region at once, and has been used for many years in the United States and other countries to track diseases such as polio and estimate levels of illegal drug usage; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has confirmed that the virus has been found in the feces of some patients diagnosed with COVID-19, and scientists have recently discovered how to detect fragments of the virus that causes COVID-19 in sewage; and

WHEREAS, the Boston-based company Biobot has partnered with researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard University, and Brigham and Women's Hospital to launch a free program to map COVID-19 around the country, and is now working with approximately 330 facilities in 40 states, representing about 10 percent of the U.S. population; and

WHEREAS, one of the particular benefits of wastewater testing is that it can detect rates of infection among people with the COVID-19 virus, but who do not have any symptoms of the disease; and

WHEREAS, for example, preliminary data showed that in a large metropolitan area in Massachusetts with 446 reported cases, Biobot's sewage-based testing method identified up to 115,000 unreported cases not known to health officials; and



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WHEREAS, wastewater testing for COVID-19 has also been successfully conducted in Australia, France, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden; and

WHEREAS, while many experts in the field do not believe that wastewater testing can be used to estimate how many people in a given area are infected, they do feel that such testing can provide useful information about the spread of COVID-19 and serve as an early warning system for future pandemics; and

WHEREAS, the City Council ("Council") believes that wastewater testing can be a useful tool to eradicate the COVID-19 pandemic as it appears to be a relatively inexpensive and noninvasive way to identify future COVID-19 outbreaks, as well as provide information to help guide future decisions about protective measures such as social distancing; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu that it requests the Mayor and the City Administration to implement a program to test the City's sewer system for traces of the virus that causes COVID-19 in order to supplement the existing tracking methods of contact tracing and swab testing, and provide additional useful information to combat the COVID-19 pandemic to both City and State policymakers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and the City Administration are requested to consult as necessary with the State Department of Health during all phases of this wastewater testing program, including its planning and implementation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and the City Administration are requested to report back in writing to the Council within 60 days of the date of the adoption of this resolution on the administration's progress in implementing a wastewater testing system for the COVID-19 virus as described herein; and



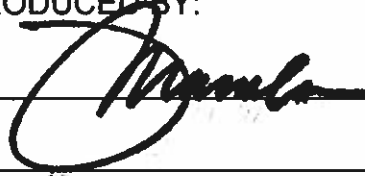
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BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor, the Managing Director, and the Director of the Department of Environmental Services.

INTRODUCED BY:



DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

MAY 20 2020

Honolulu, Hawaii

Councilmembers

CITY COUNCIL
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
HONOLULU, HAWAII
CERTIFICATE

RESOLUTION 20-130

Introduced: 05/20/20 By: JOEY MANAHAN

Committee: COUNCIL

Title: RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE MAYOR AND THE CITY ADMINISTRATION TO IMPLEMENT A PROGRAM TO TEST THE CITY'S SEWER SYSTEM FOR TRACES OF THE VIRUS THAT CAUSES COVID-19.

Voting Legend: * = Aye w/Reservations

06/03/20	COUNCIL	RESOLUTION 20-130 WAS ADOPTED.
		5 AYES: ANDERSON, ELEFANTE, MANAHAN, MENOR*, WATERS.
		4 NOES: FUKUNAGA, KOBAYASHI, PINE, TSUNEYOSHI.

I hereby certify that the above is a true record of action by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu on this RESOLUTION.



GLEN I. TAKAHASHI, CITY CLERK



IKAIKA ANDERSON, CHAIR AND PRESIDING OFFICER